

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND BICYCLE COMMITTEE (PTBC)

Fiscal Year 2008

In FY 08, the PTBC has been actively involved in transit, pedestrian, and bicycle issues that concern residents of the Town of Amherst. Given the climate change already underway and the economic pressure from gas prices that topped \$4.00 a gallon this year, we believe it is more important than ever to advocate for the safety and convenience of pedestrians, transit riders, and cyclists.

As of July 1, 2007 a Gatehouse Road extension was added to the Belchertown Express Bus. This increased the Gatehouse Road service to seven runs per day while substantially cutting the Town's cost. Ridership in the Echo Hill neighborhood is strong. The schedule for the Route 32 bus (Puffers' Pond-Atkins Corner) was also modified to ensure that the bus arrives on time at stops on the North portion of the loop. Summer Saturday Service continued on this route, and it was well-utilized by residents. The PTBC continued to promote the Route 32, and overall ridership increased 20% in FY 08 over FY 07. Thanks to negotiations by the Town Manager, PVTa contributed several new bus shelters. We recommended installation of shelters, benches and bike racks in Kendrick Park, on University Drive, and on Main Street just north of Aspen Chase. Installation should be completed in FY 09.

The PTBC has worked to increase its responsiveness to the concerns of Amherst residents. We reviewed plans for the reconstruction of University Drive, and recommended the placement of additional crosswalks. We discussed a proposal to put angled parking on N. Pleasant Street downtown and rejected it because of safety concerns for cyclists. A concern was raised at Town Meeting about the safety of the Pomeroy/West Street intersection. We advocated for immediate and longer-term safety improvements, such as painting the crosswalks, adding a pedestrian light, and ADA standard curb cuts. The crosswalks are painted, but this intersection will remain a hazard for pedestrians until the curb-cuts and pedestrian light are completed.

Lastly, this fiscal year ended with the death of our Chair, Frank Wells. His exceptional commitment to transportation issues overshadowed his battle with leukemia for many years, and we recognize his many contributions. Newly elected officers are as follows: Jane Ashby, Chair; Helene Ver Ecke, Vice-chair; Fran Van Treese, Secretary. We thank our former Secretary, Karen Kowles for recording the meeting minutes this past year.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Ashby, Chair